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Consommation et  
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Patent Office

Ottawa, Canada  
K1A 0C9

(21) (A1)	2,096,911
(22)	1993/05/25
(43)	1993/11/29

(51) INTL. CL. <sup>5</sup> C12N-015/57; C12N-009/64; C12Q-001/68; C12Q-001/37;  
C12Q-001/02; C12N-005/10; G01N-033/573

(19) (CA) APPLICATION FOR CANADIAN PATENT (12)

(54) Protease and Related DNA Compounds

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(30) (US) 07/891,542 1992/05/28

(57) 10 Claims

Notice: This application is as filed and may therefore contain an  
incomplete specification.

Canada

CCA 3754 (10-82) 41 7530-21-038-3254

## Abstract

This invention provides an amyloid precursor protein-cleaving protein and related nucleic acid compounds. The invention also provides methods, materials and assays. The compounds of this invention will further the characterization of neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and Down's syndrome.

## PROTEASE AND RELATED DNA COMPOUNDS

5 A peptide of 42 to 43 residues known as the  
β-amyloid peptide (β/A4) has been implicated in Alzheimer's  
disease and Down's syndrome. Researchers hypothesize that  
abnormal accumulation of this 4 kilodalton (kd) protein in  
the brain is due to cleavage of a larger precursor protein,  
called amyloid precursor protein (APP). Normal cleavage of  
APP occurs within the A4 region, indicating that an  
10 alternate cleavage event occurs when the normal full length  
is generated. The amino terminal residue of β/A4 is most  
often an aspartic acid (Asp), indicating that a protease  
which cleaves between the methionine (Met) at position 596  
[Met<sub>596</sub>; using the numbering system according to J. Kang,  
15 et al., Nature 325:733 (1987).] and Asp<sub>597</sub> of APP would  
generate amyloid. Therefore, proteases which cleave the  
APP so as to generate β/A4 are important tools for  
characterizing Alzheimer's disease and Down's syndrome.

In the past, researchers have attempted to  
20 characterize the abnormal cleavage event through the use of  
classical protein purification techniques. These investi-  
gations have resulted in reports of a partially purified 68  
kilodalton protease which cleaves at a Met-Asp bond of a  
synthetic peptide. C. Abraham, et al., Neurobiology of  
25 Ageing 11A:303 (1990). In 1991, Abraham and co-workers,  
compared the cleavage pattern of the 68 kd protease with  
known serine proteases. C. Abraham, et al., Biochemical  
and Biophysical Research Communications, 174:790 (1991).  
Subsequently, the same researchers reported that the  
30 activity seen in the prior studies was actually the action  
of two independent proteases. One was identified as a  
calcium-dependent serine protease and the other a cysteine  
metalloprotease. C. Abraham, et al., Journal of Cellular  
Biochemistry, 15:115 (1991); C. Abraham, et al., Journal  
35 of Neurochemistry, 57:5109 (1991). No structure or  
characterization of these proteases was disclosed.

The present invention provides a new enzyme which is structurally different from those previously described and which will cleave APP to generate amyloidogenic fragments of the size expected of a Met<sup>1</sup>-Asp<sup>1</sup> cleavage. Thus, the new enzyme is very useful in  
5 furthering the characterization of Alzheimer's disease and Down's syndrome. Moreover, use of the invention may result in treatments for these or other related diseases.

To date there has been no satisfactory means of  
10 diagnosing Alzheimer's disease in a person until the dementia completely manifests itself. Confirmation of the dementia as having arisen from Alzheimer's disease requires a post-mortem examination of the brain of the afflicted patient. The instant invention provides a means of  
15 determining those patients having Alzheimer's disease or a propensity of developing Alzheimer's disease while such patients are still alive.

For purposes of clarity and as an aid in understanding the invention, as disclosed and claimed  
20 herein, the following items are defined below.

"293 cells" refers to a widely available transformed human primary embryonal kidney cell line, as described in F.L. Graham, et al., Journal of General Virology, 35:59-72 (1977). This cell line may be obtained,  
25 for example, from the American Type Culture Collection, 12301 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Maryland, 10852-1776 (ATCC), under the accession number ATCC CRL 1573.

"AV12 cells" refers to another widely available cell line which may be obtained from the ATCC under the  
30 accession number ATCC CRL 9595.

"Amyloidogenic fragment" - An APP fragment comprising the  $\beta$ /A4 peptide.

"Functional compound of SEQ ID NO:1" - A compound comprising SEQ ID NO:1 which is capable of  
35 cleaving APP.

"Kunitz-like domain" - A protease inhibitor similar to soybean trypsin inhibitor or a nucleic acid sequence encoding a protease inhibitor which is similar to the soybean trypsin inhibitor. For example, the Kunitz Protease Inhibitor (KPI) region of APP as described in P. Ponte, *et al.*, Nature 331:525 (1988), or R.E. Tanzi, *et al.*, Nature 331:528 (1988), or N. Kitaguchi, *et al.*, Nature 331:530 (1988) is a Kunitz-like domain.

"pRC/Zyme" - A modified pRC/CMV eukaryotic expression vector, the pRC/CMV vector being available commercially (Invitrogen Corporation, 3985 Sorrento Valley Blvd., Suite B, San Diego, California 92121). The plasmid pRC/Zyme comprises a human cytomegalovirus promoter and enhancer, a bovine growth hormone polyadenylation signal, a neomycin resistance gene, a beta-lactamase gene useful as an ampicillin resistance marker in E. coli, and many other features as described in the 1991 Invitrogen Catalog, page 29, as well as a NotI/SalI insert of 1451 base pairs which contains an entire Zyme coding region.

"pSZyme" - A modified E.coli cloning vector pSPORT-1™ [described in E.Y. Chen, *et al.*, DNA 4:165 (1985)], the plasmid pSPORT-1™ being commercially available (Gibco-BRL, 8400 Helgeman Court, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877). This plasmid contains an origin of replication from a pUC vector, this plasmid being described in C. Yanisch-Perron, *et al.*, Gene 33:103-119 (1985); the beta-lactamase gene which confers ampicillin resistance; a NotI/SalI insert of 1451 base pairs which contains an entire coding region of Zyme; as well as other features.

"Part of SEQ ID NO:1" - At least 6 consecutive amino acid residues of SEQ ID NO:1.

"mRNA" - ribonucleic acid (RNA) which has been transcribed either in vivo or in vitro, including, for example, RNA transcripts prepared in vitro by transcription of coding sequences of DNA by RNA polymerase.

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1  
5  
- SEQ ID NO:1 or a functional equivalent thereof -  
- SEQ ID NO:1 or a conservative alteration of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, wherein the conservative alteration results in a compound which exhibits substantially the same biological, biochemical, chemical, physical and structural qualities of SEQ ID:1.

"SEQ ID NO:3" - The DNA sequence ATC CCT GGC GGC ATC ATA CTC AGG C.

10  
"SEQ ID NO:4" - The DNA sequence AAC CGA ATC TTC AGG TCT TCC TCG GG.

"SEQ ID NO:5" - The DNA sequence TCG CTC TCT CCT GCG GAC ACA GA.

"SEQ ID NO:6" - The DNA sequence CCA GGT GCT ATT CCA TGT ATG TCA TAG.

15  
"SEQ ID NO:7" - The DNA sequence TCT GTG TCC CCA GGA GAG AGC GA.

"SEQ ID NO:8" - The DNA sequence ATA CTC AAG CTC TCT TCT CAA T.

20  
"Transfection" - any transfer of nucleic acid into a host cell, with or without integration of said nucleic acid into genome of said host cell.

"Zyme" - the amino acid sequence SEQ ID NO:1 or a functional equivalent thereof.

25  
"Zyme-related band configuration" - One of two band configurations chosen from two band configurations of a herein disclosed restriction fragment polymorphism. One pattern displays a 2400 base pair band, but no 2500 base pair band. The other pattern displays a 2500 band, but no 2400 base pair band.

30  
The present invention provides amino acid compounds which comprise the amino acid sequence

35  
Met Lys Lys Leu Met Val Val Leu Ser Leu Ile Ala Ala Ala Trp Ala  
1 5 10 15  
Glu Glu Glu Asn Lys Leu Val His Gly Gly Pro Cys Asp Lys Thr Ser  
20 25 30

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His Pro Tyr Gln Ala Ala Leu Tyr Thr Ser Gly His Leu Leu Cys Gly  
35 40 45  
5 Gly Val Leu Ile His Pro Leu Trp Val Leu Thr Ala Ala His Cys Lys  
50 55 60  
Lys Pro Asn Leu Gln Val Phe Leu Gly Lys His Asn Leu Arg Gln Arg  
65 70 75 80  
10 Glu Ser Ser Gln Glu Gln Ser Ser Val Val Arg Ala Val Ile His Pro  
85 90 95  
Asp Tyr Asp Ala Ala Ser His Asp Gln Asp Ile Met Leu Leu Arg Leu  
100 105 110  
15 Ala Arg Pro Ala Lys Leu Ser Glu Leu Ile Gln Pro Leu Pro Leu Glu  
115 120 125  
Arg Asp Cys Ser Ala Asn Thr Thr Ser Cys His Ile Leu Gly Trp Gly  
130 135 140  
Lys Thr Ala Asp Gly Asp Phe Pro Asp Thr Ile Gln Cys Ala Tyr Ile  
145 150 155 160  
25 His Leu Val Ser Arg Glu Glu Cys Glu His Ala Tyr Pro Gly Gln Ile  
165 170 175  
Thr Gln Asn Met Leu Cys Ala Gly Asp Glu Lys Tyr Gly Lys Asp Ser  
180 185 190  
30 Cys Gln Gly Asp Ser Gly Gly Pro Leu Val Cys Gly Asp His Leu Arg  
195 200 205  
Gly Leu Val Ser Trp Gly Asn Ile Pro Cys Gly Ser Lys Glu Lys Pro  
210 215 220  
35 Gly Val Tyr Thr Asn Val Cys Arg Tyr Thr Asn Trp Ile Gln Lys Thr  
225 230 235 240  
40 Ile Gln Ala Lys.  
244

hereinafter defined as SEQ ID NO:1, or a functional  
equivalent thereof. In particular, the amino acid compound  
45 which is SEQ ID NO:1 is preferred.

Those in the art will recognize that some  
alterations of SEQ ID NO:1 will fail to change the function  
of the amino acid compound. For instance some hydrophobic  
amino acids may be exchanged for other hydrophobic amino  
50 acids, amino acids with similar side chains may be  
interchanged, basic amino acids may be interchanged with

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5 other basic amino acids, acidic amino acids may be  
interchanged with other acidic amino acids, small amino  
acids may be interchanged with other small amino acids or  
various other conservative changes may be made. Those  
altered amino acid compounds which confer substantially the  
same function in substantially the same manner as the  
exemplified amino acid compound are also encompassed within  
the present invention.

10 Artisans will also recognize that this protein  
can be synthesized by a number of different methods. All  
of the amino acid compounds of the invention can be made by  
chemical methods well known in the art, including solid  
phase peptide synthesis or recombinant methods. Both  
methods are described in U.S. Patent 4,617,149.  
15 Recombinant methods are preferred if a high yield is  
desired. A general method for the construction of any  
desired DNA sequence is provided in Brown, et al., Methods  
in Enzymology 68:109 (1979).

Other routes of production are well known.  
20 Expression in eucaryotic cells can be achieved via SEQ ID  
NO:2, described infra. For example, the amino acid  
compounds can be produced in eucaryotic cells using simian  
virus 40, cytomegalovirus, or mouse mammary tumor virus-  
derived expression vectors comprising DNA which encodes SEQ  
25 ID NO:1. As is well known in the art, some viruses are  
also appropriate vectors. For example, the adenovirus, the  
vaccinia virus, the herpes virus, the baculovirus, and the  
Rous sarcoma virus are useful. Such a method is described  
in U.S. Patent 4,775,624. Several alternate methods of  
30 expression are described in J. Sambrook, et al., Molecular  
Cloning: A Laboratory Manual, Chapters 16 and 17 (1989).

In another embodiment, the present invention  
encompasses nucleic acid compounds which comprise nucleic  
acid sequences encoding SEQ ID NO:1. As skilled artisans  
35 recognize, the amino acid compounds of the invention can be  
encoded by a multitude of different nucleic acid sequences



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due to the degeneracy of the genetic code, wherein most of the amino acids are encoded by more than one nucleic acid triplet. Because these alternate nucleic acid sequences would encode the same amino acid sequences, the present invention further comprises these alternate nucleic acid sequences. Preferably, the nucleic acid compound is DNA, sense or antisense mRNA. A most preferred embodiment of a DNA compound which encodes Zyme has this sequence:

10	ATGAAGAAGC TGATGGTGGT GCTGAGTCTG ATTGCTGCAG CCTGGGCAGA	50
	GGAGCAGAAT AASTTGGTGC ATGGCGGACC CTGGGACAAG ACATCTCACC	100
	CCTACC.AGC TGGCCTCTAC ACCTCGGGCC ACTTGTCTCTG TGGTGGGGTC	150
	TTTATCATTG CACTGTGGGT CCTCAGAGCT GCTTACTGCA AAAAACCGAA	200
	TCTTCAGGTC TTCTGGGGA AGCATAACCT TCGGCAAGG GAGAGTTCCC	250
15	AGGAGCAGAG TTCTGTTCTG CGGCTGTGA TCCACCCCTGA CTATGATGCC	300
	GCCAGCCATG ACCAGGACAT CATGCTGTTG CGCTGGCAC GCCCAGCCAA	350
	ACTCTCTGAA CTCATCCAGC CCTTCCCTT GGAGAGGGAC TGCTAGCCA	400
	ACACCACCAG CTGTCACATC CTGGGCTGGG GCAAGACAGC AGATGGTGAT	450
	TTCCCTGACA CCATCCAGTG TGCATACATC CACCTGTGT CCGTGAGGA	500
20	GTGTGAGCAT GCCTACCTG GCCAGATCAC CCAGAACATG TTGTGCTCTG	550
	GGGATGAGAA GTACGGGAAG GATTCCTGCC AGGCTGATTC TGGGGGTCCG	600
	CTGGTATGTC GAGACCACCT CCGAGGCCCTT GTGTGATGGG GTAACATCCC	650
	CTGTGATCA AAGGAGAAGC CAGGAGTCTA CACCAACGTC TGCAGATACA	700
25	CGAACTGGAT CCAAAAAACC ATTGAGGCCA AG	732

which is hereinafter defined as SEQ ID NO:2. However, also preferred are those nucleic acid compounds which are sense and antisense mRNA.

Also provided by the present invention are nucleic acid vectors comprising nucleic acids which encode SEQ ID NO:1 or a functional equivalent thereof. The preferred nucleic acid vectors are those which are DNA. Most preferred are DNA vectors which comprise the DNA sequence which is SEQ ID NO:2. An especially preferred DNA vector is the plasmid pSZyme.

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E. coli/pSZyme, which contains a cloning vector comprising SEQ ID NO:2, was deposited and made part of the stock culture collection of the Northern Regional Research Laboratories (NPRL), Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Peoria, Illinois, 61604 on April 29, 1992, under the accession number NPRL 5-18971. SEQ ID NO:2 can be isolated from the plasmid, for example, as a 1451 base pair NotI/SalI restriction fragment. Other fragments are useful in obtaining SEQ ID NO:2.

Additionally, the DNA sequences can be synthesized using commercially available automated DNA synthesizers, such as the ABS (Applied Biosystems, 850 Lincoln Centre Drive, Foster City, CA 94404) 380B DNA synthesizer. The DNA sequences can also be generated by the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) as described in U.S. Patent No. 4,889,818.

Restriction fragments of these vectors are also provided. The preferred fragments are the 1451 base pair NotI/SalI restriction fragment, the 803 base pair BsrBI/Esp3I restriction fragment and the 815 base pair EcoNI/BfaI restriction fragment of pSZyme.

Moreover, DNA vectors of the present invention preferably comprise a promoter positioned to drive expression of SEQ ID NO:2, or a functional equivalent thereof. Those vectors wherein said promoter functions in human embryonic kidney cells (293 cells), AV12 cells, yeast cells, or Escherichia coli cells are preferred. The DNA expression vector most preferred is plasmid pRC/Zyme.

The plasmid pSZyme, isolatable from E. coli using standard techniques, is readily modified to construct expression vectors that produce Zyme in a variety of organisms, including, for example, E. coli, yeast of the family Saccharomycetes, and Sf9 cells derived from fall armyworm ovaries of the genus Spodoptera, (a commonly used host for baculovirus expression systems). [Commonly used

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references, such as Sambrook et al., supra, describe these techniques.]

The current literature contains techniques for constructing AV12 expression vectors and for transfecting AV12 host cells. See, e.g., U.S. Patent No. 4,992,373. The current literature also contains numerous techniques for constructing 293 expression vectors and for transfecting 293 host cells.

The construction protocols utilized for 293 cells can be followed to construct analogous vectors for other cell lines, merely by substituting, if necessary, the appropriate regulatory elements using well known techniques. Promoters which may be used, for example, include the thymidine kinase promoter, the metallothionin promoter, the heat shock promoter, immunoglobulin promoter, or various viral promoters such as the mouse mammary tumor virus promoter, SV40 promoter, herpesvirus promoters, or the BK virus promoters. In addition, artificially constructed promoters, derived from "consensus" sequences or created as hybrids of other promoters may be used in the course of practicing this invention.

The DNA compounds of the present invention also include primers and probes. Nucleic acid compounds of at least 18 consecutive base pairs which encode SEQ ID NO:1 or a part thereof are included in the present invention. Probes or primers which are DNA are preferred. Most preferred probes or primers are: SEQ ID NO:3 and SEQ ID NO:4. Those in the art will recognize the techniques associated with probes and primers as being well known.

For example, all or part of SEQ ID NO:3 or SEQ ID NO:4 may be used to hybridize to the coding sequence. The full length sequence can then be generated using polymerase chain reaction (PCR) amplification, using well known techniques. The full length sequence can be subsequently subcloned into any vector of choice.

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Alternatively, SEQ ID NO:3 or SEQ ID NO:4 may be radioactively labeled at the 5' end in order to screen cDNA libraries by conventional means. Furthermore, any piece of Zyme-encoding DNA which has been bound to a filter may be  
5 saturated with total mRNA transcripts, in order to reverse transcribe the mRNA transcripts which bind.

Primers and probes may be obtained by means well known in the art. For example, once pSZyme is isolated, restriction enzymes and subsequent gel separation may be  
10 used to isolate the fragment of choice.

Another embodiment of the present invention is a genomic clone of Zyme. The preferred genomic clone is the 4.0 kilobase HindIII fragment from a human chromosome 19 library which hybridizes to fragments of DNA which  
15 encode SEQ ID NO:1. This can be obtained via hybridization with SEQ ID NO:2, or parts thereof. For example, SEQ ID NO:3 and SEQ ID NO:4 may be radioactively labelled and used to probe a chromosome 19 library, in order to then identify and isolate the corresponding genomic DNA.

20 The present invention also provides an Alzheimer's diagnostic assay wherein donor human DNA is:

1) digested with the restriction enzyme Taq I;  
2) hybridized with labelled Zyme DNA to reveal a Zyme-related band configuration; and

25 3) compared to the similarly-digested and hybridized band configurations of those members of the donor's family who display or displayed the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. The preferred Alzheimer's diagnostic assay utilizes a blood sample as the source of donor human  
30 DNA.

Since the genomic DNA is provided in the present invention and a Zyme-related restriction fragment length polymorphism is identified by the disclosure of this invention, the remainder of this procedure may be  
35 accomplished according to methods known in the art. For example, U.S. Patent 4,666,828, describes these procedures.

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[Numerous references, such as B. Lewin, Genes, at page 78 (1987), review restriction fragment length polymorphism techniques and theory.]

5 Host cells which harbor the nucleic acids provided by the present invention are also encompassed within this invention. A preferred host cell is an oocyte. A preferred oocyte is one which has been injected with sense mRNA or DNA compounds of the present invention. A still more preferred oocyte is one which has been injected with  
10 sense mRNA or DNA compounds of the present invention in conjunction with DNA or mRNA which encodes APP. Most preferred oocytes of the present invention are those which have been injected with sense mRNA.

15 Other preferred host cells are those which have been transfected with a vector which comprises SEQ ID NO:2. Preferred SEQ ID NO:2-transfected host cells include include 293, AV12, yeast and E. coli cells. Most preferred 293 and E. coli host cells are 293/pRC/2yme, E. coli/pSZyme.

20 Also preferred is a host cell which has been co-transfected with a DNA vector which comprises SEQ ID NO:2 and a DNA vector which comprises the coding sequence of APP. 293 cells, AV12 cells, yeast cells and E. coli cells are especially useful co-transfected host cells.

25 An oocyte host cell can be constructed according to the procedure described in Lübbert, et al., Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), 84:4332 (1987). DNA or RNA which encodes APP (both the 695 and 751 amino acid forms) may be obtained as described in Selkoe et al.,  
30 Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (USA), 85:7341 (1988). Other host cell transfection is well known in the art. Co-transfection of cells may be accomplished using standard techniques. See e.g., Corman et al., Molecular and Cellular Biology, 2:1044 (1982).

35 Therefore, the present invention also provides a process for constructing a host cell capable of expressing

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SEQ ID NO:1, said method comprising transfecting a host cell with a DNA vector that comprises a DNA sequence which encodes SEQ ID NO:1. A preferred method utilizes 293 cells as host cells. These 293 cells may be obtained from the ATCC under the accession number ATCC CRL 1573. Another preferred method utilizes AV12 cells as host cells. AV12 cells may be obtained from the ATCC under the accession number ATCC CRL 9595. Another preferred method utilizes yeast cells of the family Saccharomycetes or the bacterium E. coli as the host cells.

The preferred process utilizes an expression vector which comprises SEQ ID NO:2 in 293 cells. Especially preferred for this purpose is pRC/Zyme.

Another preferred process comprises (a) a DNA vector which comprises SEQ ID NO:2 and (b) a DNA expression vector which encodes the APP coding sequence. A most preferred process utilizes the DNA vector pRC/Zyme. Transfected host cells may be cultured under conditions well known to skilled artisans such that SEQ ID NO:1 is expressed, thus producing Zyme in the transfected host cell.

Additionally, the invention provides a process for identifying DNA homologous to a probe of the present invention, which comprises combining test nucleic acid with the probe under hybridizing conditions and identifying those test nucleic acids which hybridize. The preferred probes for use in this method are SEQ ID NO:3 and SEQ ID NO:4. Hybridization techniques are well known in the art. See, e.g., Sambrook, et al., supra.

Assays utilizing the compounds provided by the present invention are also encompassed within this invention. The assays provided determine whether a substance is a ligand for Zyme, said method comprising contacting Zyme with said substance, monitoring Zyme activity by physically detectable means, and identifying those substances which interact with or affect Zyme.

Preferred assays of the present invention incorporate a cell culture assay, a high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) assay or a synthetic competition assay.

5 Preferred cell culture assays utilize oocytes, AV12, E. coli, yeast or 293 cells which co-express nucleic acids which encode Zyme and APP. Those co-expressing cell culture assays which are preferred include those which utilize 293/pRC/Zyme. A preferred assay utilizes yeast  
10 cells, and a DNA compound which encodes amino acids 587 to 606 of APP. One method of performing the yeast assay is described in Smith and Kohorn, Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA, 98:5159 (1991), using Zyme-encoding DNA and APP-encoding DNA which comprises the  
15 Met596/ASP597 cleavage site codons.

Most preferred oocyte assays co-express mRNA. Most preferred cell culture assays utilize Western blot analysis or radiolabelled APP as the physically detectable means. A preferred HPLC assay is one wherein the substrate  
20 utilized is a full length, eukaryotically-derived APP.

The most preferred synthetic competition assay is one wherein the substance competes with the Kunitz-like domain gene product for binding to Zyme. The most preferred Zyme/Kunitz domain competition assay is one  
25 wherein APP is labelled with radioisotope.

The cell culture assays may be accomplished according to the procedures detailed by F. Ausubel, et al., Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, (1989) at pages 9.1-9.5. The HPLC assay may be performed essentially as  
30 described in Hirs and Timasheff, eds, Methods in Enzymology, Volume 91, Sections V and VI (1983). The Zyme/Kunitz-like domain binding or competition assay may be performed as described by J. Bennet and H. Yamamura, Neurotransmitter Receptor Binding, (1985) Chapter 3.

35 The present invention also provides a method for identifying or purifying Zyme, which comprises saturating

test protein with anti-Zyme antibody, eliminating anti-Zyme antibody which fails to bind, and detecting the anti-Zyme antibody which remains bound. Antibody imaging techniques are known in the art.

5 The following are examples of aspects of the present invention. These examples are illustrative only and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention in any way.

10 Example 1

Production of Zyme in 293 cells

A lyophilized aliquot of E. coli pSZyme can be obtained from the Northern Regional Research Laboratories, Peoria, Illinois, USA 61604, under the accession number NRRL B-18271 and used directly as the culture in the process described below. This culture has been deposited with the NRRL

20 Plasmid pSZyme was isolated from a culture of E. coli/pSZyme by cesium chloride purification. Plasmid pSZyme was then digested with SalI and NotI. The resulting fragment was linear. DNA ligase was used to ligate this SalI-NotI fragment and a SalI-HindIII linker into a previously linearized pRc plasmid™. (Invitrogen, catalog #V750-20)

25 Competent E. coli cells were then transfected with the newly created pRc/Zyme vector which contained SEQ ID NO:2 and selected for those cells which contained the ampicillin resistance gene by growing on ampicillin-containing medium.

30 After transfection of the pRc/Zyme vector into E. coli, a subsequent plasmid preparation was made in order to isolate the pRc/Zyme vector. In order to transfect 293 cells with the pRc/Zyme vector, the procedure developed by Chen and Okayama was employed. C. Chen and H. Okayama, Molecular and Cellular Biology, 7:2745 (1987). These cells



were used in the cell culture assay as described in Example 2.

Selection on the antibiotic G418 (geneticin) was included in this step to produce stable transformants in 293 cells. The colonies which grew in the presence of G418 were then used as a source of Zyme.

Example 2  
Cell Culture Assay

Human embryonic kidney cells (293 cells) were co-transfected with pRcZyme and an APP-encoding vector. On one occasion, a vector encoding the 695 amino acid APP (which lacks a Kunitz-like domain) was cotransfected with pRcZyme. On another occasion, a vector encoding the 751 amino acid APP (with the Kunitz-like domain) was cotransfected with pRcZyme.

Transfection was achieved using standard calcium phosphate transfection. Other transfection protocols, such as described by Sambrook, *et al.*, *supra*, are also effective. Amyloidogenic fragments were detected when the 695 amino acid (without KPI) APP coding sequence was used, via Western Blot analysis, as described in Sambrook, *et al.*, *supra*, using antisera to the carboxy-terminal amino acids of the APP protein. Anti BX6, as described in T Oltersdorf, *et al.*, *Journal of Biological Chemistry*, 265:4492-4497 (1991), was used in this procedure. Amyloidogenic fragments were not detected when the 751 amino acid (with KPI) APP was used.

Example 3  
HPLC Assay

Full length APP is produced in cells which have been infected with APP-encoding baculovirus. This procedure is accomplished according to J. Knops, *et al.*,

Journal of Biological Chemistry, 266:7285 (1991).. APP is then incubated in the presence of active Zyme and test compound. APP fragments are subsequently separated by high performance liquid chromatography. Each pooled fragment is then microsequenced using standard, such as those of Hirs and Timasheff, eds, Methods in Enzymology, Vol. 91 Sections V and VI, (1983). The quantity of amyloidogenic fragments (those which terminate at either Met<sub>596</sub> or Asp<sub>597</sub>) generated are compared to the quantity generated in the absence of test compound to determine the ability of the test compound to affect Zyme.

#### Example 4

##### Zyme/Kunitz-like Domain Competition Assay

A peptide representing the KPI domain of APP is synthesized and labelled with the isotope iodine-125 (<sup>125</sup>I). Competition binding assays are then conducted according to J.P. Bennet and H. Yamamura, Neurotransmitter Receptor Binding 61 (1985). Zyme is then bound to plastic microtitre wells as in the traditional ELISA assay. One such typical protocol for this step is described in F. Ausubel F., Current Protocols in Molecular Biology, 2:11.1-11.3 (1989). Radiolabelled KPI domain and unlabelled competitor compound is subsequently added to the wells of the 96-well microtitre plate. The wells are then washed. The remaining isotope is recorded in order to calculate the relative affinity of the unlabelled competitor compound to Zyme.

#### Example 5

##### Isolating the Genomic Clone

A genomic library specific for human chromosome 19 genomic library in Charon 21A bacteriophage was purchased from the American Type Culture Collection, 12301

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Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Maryland, USA 20852, (ATCC)  
(Catalog number 57711). These phage were transfected into  
E. coli K802 rec A host strain (Cat. no. 47026). The  
titre of the phage was  $6.5-7.0 \times 10^4$  plaque forming units  
per microliter. A genomic clone of the gene encoding Zyme  
was isolated by conventional screening of phage libraries  
(See e.g., Sambrook et al., Molecular Cloning: A  
Laboratory Manual 2.6-2.114, 1989).

A radiolabelled cDNA probe was synthesized  
utilizing the polymerase chain reaction (such as that  
described by Schowalter and Sommer, Analytical  
Biochemistry, 177:90-94, 1989) by specifically annealing  
SEQ ID NO: 5 and SEQ ID NO: 6 primers to an EcoRI/NotI  
purified (Bio-Rad Laboratories, P.O. Box 708, Rockville  
Centre, New York USA, 11571, catalog number 732-6010)  
pRC-Zyme DNA fragment.

Hybridization and washing was carried out at  
65°C as described in the Zeta-Probe™ blotting membrane  
instruction manual (Bio-Rad, catalog number 164-0153).  
Putative primary Zyme bacteriophage were stored in SM  
buffer containing 2-3 drops of chloroform. A single  
homogenous plaque (711-4) was subsequently isolated from a  
tertiary screen. Isolation of lambda bacteriophage DNA  
positive by in situ hybridization to Zyme was accomplished  
using standard techniques.

Purified lambda phage Zyme DNA was digested with  
HindIII and electrophoresed on a 1% agarose/TBE (0.1 M  
Tris-HCl pH 8.3, 0.1 M boric acid, 1 mM  
ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid) gel. Separated DNA was  
then transferred onto a Zeta-Probe™ blotting membrane  
(0.5x TBE running buffer, constant 80 volts for 1 hour) as  
described in section 2.5 of the Zeta-Probe™ instruction  
manual using non-denaturing conditions, then denatured  
(0.4M NaOH for 10 minutes) as described in section 2.8 of  
the Zeta-Probe™ instruction manual.

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5 A radiolabelled probe encompassing the  
BamHI/XbaI fragment of pRc/Zyme was used with a random  
primed DNA labelling kit (such as that which is  
commercially available by Boehringer Mannheim Corporation,  
9115 Hague Road, P.O. Box 50414, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA  
46250-0414, catalog number 1004760) to determine if the 3'  
coding sequence was found in our clone. Hybridization and  
washing to the above Zeta-Probe™ membrane was performed as  
previously described and autoradiography revealed homology  
10 to the 3' region of Zyme.

To confirm that phage 711-4 contained the  
5' Zyme coding region, the polymerase chain reaction using  
SEQ ID NO:7 and SEQ ID NO:8 was again utilized to  
specifically amplify a 470 base pair band from tertiary  
15 plaque purified chromosome 19 Zyme phage DNA according to  
Kainz, *et al.*, *Analytical Biochemistry*, 202:46 (1992).  
This DNA fragment was purified, then subcloned into the pUC  
19 expression plasmid, described *supra*. The identity of  
the DNA sequences corresponding to sequences 1 to 33 of the  
20 5' Zyme cDNA coding region and an additional 272  
nucleotides upstream of the 5' Zyme coding region were  
confirmed by DNA sequence analysis, using standard  
techniques.

25 Plasmid Deposits

Under the provisions of the Budapest Treaty on  
the International Recognition of the Deposit of  
Microorganisms for Purposes of Patent Procedures the  
following culture has been deposited with the permanent  
30 culture collection of the Northern Regional Research Center  
(NRRL), Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of  
Agriculture, 1815 N. University Street, Peoria, Illinois,  
61604:

Deposited Material

E. coli K12/ pSZyme

Accession Number

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Claims

1. An amino acid compound which comprises the amino acid sequence

5 Met Lys Lys Leu Met Val Val Leu Ser Leu Ile Ala Ala Ala Trp Ala  
1 5 10 15

10 Glu Glu Gln Asn Lys Leu Val His Gly Gly Pro Cys Asp Lys Thr Ser  
20 25 30

His Pro Tyr Gln Ala Ala Leu Tyr Thr Ser Gly His Leu Leu Cys Gly  
35 40 45

15 Gly Val Leu Ile His Pro Leu Trp Val Leu Thr Ala Ala His Cys Lys  
50 55 60

Lys Pro Asn Leu Gln Val Phe Leu Gly Lys His Asn Leu Arg Gln Arg  
65 70 75 80

20 Glu Ser Ser Gln Glu Gln Ser Ser Val Val Arg Ala Val Ile His Pro  
85 90 95

25 Asp Tyr Asp Ala Ala Ser His Asp Gln Asp Ile Met Leu Leu Arg Leu  
100 105 110

Ala Arg Pro Ala Lys Leu Ser Glu Leu Ile Gln Pro Leu Pro Leu Glu  
115 120 125

30 Arg Asp Cys Ser Ala Asn Thr Thr Ser Cys His Ile Leu Gly Trp Gly  
130 135 140

Lys Thr Ala Asp Gly Asp Phe Pro Asp Thr Ile Gln Cys Ala Tyr Ile  
145 150 155 160

35 His Leu Val Ser Arg Glu Glu Cys Glu His Ala Tyr Pro Gly Gln Ile  
165 170 175

40 Thr Gln Asn Met Leu Cys Ala Gly Asp Glu Lys Tyr Gly Lys Asp Ser  
180 185 190

Cys Gln Gly Asp Ser Gly Gly Pro Leu Val Cys Gly Asp His Leu Arg  
195 200 205

45 Gly Leu Val Ser Trp Gly Asn Ile Pro Cys Gly Ser Lys Glu Lys Pro  
210 215 220

Gly Val Tyr Thr Asn Val Cys Arg Tyr Thr Asn Trp Ile Gln Lys Thr  
225 230 235 240

50 Ile Gln Ala Lys  
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hereinafter defined as SEQ ID NO:1, or a functional equivalent thereof.

2. A nucleic acid compound which comprises an nucleic acid sequence which encodes for a compound of Claim 1 or a part thereof.

3. A nucleic acid compound as claimed in Claim 2 which comprises the sequence

	ATGAAGAAGC TGATGCTGGT GCTGAGTCTG ATTGCTGCAG CCTGGGCAGA	50
10	GGAGCAGAAT AAGTTGGTGC ATGGCGGACC CTGGACAAG ACATCTCACC	100
	CCTACCAAGC TGCCCTCTAC ACCTCGGSCC ACTTGCTCTG TGGTGGGTC	150
	CTTATCCATC CACTGTGGGT CCTCACAGCT GCCCCTGCA AAAAACCGAA	200
	TCTTCAGTC TTCTGGGGA AGCATAACCT TCGTCAAGG GAGAGTTCCC	250
	AGGAGCAGAG TTCTGTGTC CGGCTGTGA TCCACCCTGA CTATGATGCT	300
15	GCCAGCCATG ACCAGGACAT CATGCTGTTG CGCCTGCCAC GCCCAGCCAA	350
	ACTCTCTGAA CTCATCCAGC CCCTTCCCCT GGAGAGGGAC TGCTCAGCCA	400
	ACACCACCAG CTGCCACATC CTGGGCTGGG GCAAGACAGC AGATGGTGAT	450
	TTCCCTGACA CCATCCAGTG TGCATACATC CACCTGGTGT CCCGTGAGGA	500
	GTGTGAGCAT GCCTACCCTG GCCAGATCAC CCAGAACATG TTGTGTGCTG	550
20	GGGATCAGAA GTACGGGAAG GATTCTGCCC AGGGTGATTC TGGGGTCCG	600
	CTGGTATGTC GAGACCACCT CCGAGGCCCT GTGTATGGG GTAACATCCC	650
	CTGTGGATCA AAGGAGAAGC CAGGAGTCTA CACCAACCTC TGCAGATACA	700
	CGAACTGGAT CCAAAAAACC ATTACGCCCA AG	732

25 or a functional equivalent or part thereof.

4. A nucleic acid vector which comprises the nucleic acid compound of Claim 3.

5. A DNA vector of Claim 4 which is pSZyme.

6. A host cell transfected with a nucleic acid vector of Claim 4.

7. A genomic clone of Zyme which comprises a 4.0 kilobase HindIII fragment from a human chromosome 19 library which hybridizes to fragments of DNA of the compound of claim 3 under conditions suitable for selective hybridization.

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8. A process for diagnosing Alzheimer's disease or a propensity to develop Alzheimer's disease in a patient which comprises

- a) securing DNA from said patient;
- 5 b) digesting said DNA with a restriction enzyme;
- c) hybridizing said digested DNA with a labeled nucleotide sequence corresponding to the compound of SEQ ID NO:2, or a part thereof; and
- 10 d) comparing pattern of hybridization to similarly-digested and hybridized band configurations of those members of the donor's family who display or have displayed the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

9. An assay for determining whether a test  
15 substance is a functional ligand for a protein of SEQ ID NO:1, said method comprising

- a) contacting the protein with said test substance;
- b) monitoring the protein's activity by
- 20 physically detectable means; and
- c) identifying those substances which interact with or affect the activity of the protein relative to a control which receives no test substance.

10. A method for expressing a nucleic acid  
25 sequence as claimed in Claim 2 in a transfected host cell, said method comprising culturing said transfected host cell under conditions suitable for gene expression.

30